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10. A method of ordering an item using a distributed computing system including at least one client (20) and at least one server (10), the method comprising:

showing and/or describing an item offered for sale to a user (80) via the client;

enabling the user to order the item by a single interaction with the client;  
and

in response to the single interaction with the client (20), placing an order for the offered item.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the single interaction is by one of the group including:

a pressing of a single button; and

a pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein placing the order is achieved by using:

information related to the item being offered for sale; and

user related personal information.

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13. The method of claim 12, wherein the personal information includes at least one of the group including a user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the personal information is stored in memory in the client.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein the distributed computing system is an interactive television system and wherein the showing and/or describing of the item is, at least in part, by television signal.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein the client (20) includes an auxiliary data processor (50) and a client computer (22,24,26).

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the client (20) is associated with at least a set top box, and wherein the personal information is stored at the set top box.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the set top box is in communication with a local computer (40) and associated storage (70) and wherein the method further comprises:

the client (20) retrieving information from one or more of the local computer (40) and the mass storage (70).

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the method further comprises:

controlling the client (20) by means of the local computer (40).

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the local computer (40) is part of a local area network.

21. The method of claim 10, wherein the system further includes a central processing facility (60) in communication with the server (10) and wherein the method comprises:

sending information used in processing the order from the client (20) to the central processing facility (60).

22. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

sending an order confirmation to the user (80) to confirm the order.

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

communicating information between the client (20) and the server (10) via the central processing facility (60).

24. The method of claim 23, wherein a telephone system acts as the central processing facility (60).

25. The method of claim 10 including receiving at the client (20) a data stream including:

(a) information to show and/or describe the item offered for sale via the client; and

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(b) an application, executable by the client, to enable the user to order the item by the single interaction with the client.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the data stream further includes an item identifier to identify the item offered for sale.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein the item identifier includes any one a group of identifiers including a time code and a command.

28. A method of ordering an item, the method comprising: ✓

providing a client with information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a user; and

providing the client with an application to enable the user to order the item by a single interaction with a client, responsive to which an order is placed for the offered item.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein the single interaction comprises any one of the group including:

a pressing of a single button; and

a pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

30. The method of claim 28, including receiving the order from the client, the order including:

information related to the item being offered for sale; and

user related personal information.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the personal information comprises any one of the group including a user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein application is to retrieve the personal information from a memory associated with the client.

33. The method of claim 28, including providing the information in the form of a television signal.

34. The method of claim 28 including communicating with a central processing facility (60) and wherein the client sends the order to the central processing facility (60) for receipt via a transceiver (103).

35. The method of claim 34 wherein a telephone system acts as the central processing facility (60).

36. The method of claim 28 including providing an order confirmation to the client to confirm the order.

37. The method of claim 28 including multiplexing the provision of the information and the application to the client to thereby generate a data stream for transmission to the client.

38. A computer system to order an item, the system comprising: ✓

a data processing system (50) to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a user (80); and

a client (22, 24, 26, 50) to enable the user to order the item by a single interaction with the client and, in response to the single interaction, to place an order for the offered item.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the single interaction comprises any one of the group including:

a pressing of a single button; and

a pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

40. The system of claim 38, wherein the client is to place the order using:

information related to the item being offered for sale; and

user related personal information.

41. The system of claim 40, wherein the personal information comprises any one of the group including a user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

42. The system of claim 40, wherein the personal information is stored in memory of the client.

43. The system of claim 38, wherein the distributed computing system is an interactive television system and wherein the showing and/or describing of the item by the data processing system (50) is, at least in part, performed utilizing a television signal.

44. The system of claim 38, wherein the client (20) includes a client computer (22).

45. The system of claim 38, wherein the client computer (22) is associated with at least a set top box, and wherein the personal information is stored at the set top box.

46. The system of claim 45, wherein the set top box is in communication with a local computer (40) and associated storage (70) and wherein the client computer (22) is to retrieve information from one or more of the local computer (40) and the mass storage (70).

47. The system of claim 46, wherein the local computer (40) controls the client computer (22).

48. The system of claim 46, wherein the local computer (40) is part of a local area network.

49. The system of claim 38, including a central processing facility (60) in communication with a server (10) and wherein the client (20) sends information used in processing to the central processing facility (60).

50. The system of claim 49 wherein the server (10) is to send an order confirmation to the user (80) to confirm the order.

51. The system of claim 49, wherein the central processing facility (60) is to communicate information between the client and the server (10).

52. The system of claim 51 wherein a telephone system acts as the central processing facility (60).

53. The system of claim 38 including a data stream receiver (207) to receive a data stream including:

information to show and/or describe the item offered for sale via the client; and

an application, executable by the client, to enable the user to order the item by a single interaction with the client.

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54. The system of claim 53 wherein the data stream receiver (207) includes an auxiliary data extractor (204) to extract the information from the data stream and a packet data extractor (206) to extract the application from the data stream.

55. The system of claim 54 wherein the auxiliary data extractor (204) provides the information to the data processing system (50) and the packet data extractor (200) provides the application to the client (224).

56. The system of claim 53 wherein the data stream further includes an item identifier to identify the item offered for sale.

57. The system of claim 56 wherein the item identifier includes any one a group of identifiers including a time code and a command.

58. A computer system to facilitate ordering an item, the system comprising:

a data source (107) to provide a client with information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a user; and

an application source (101) to provide a client with an application to enable the user to order the offered item by a single interaction with a client, responsive to which an order is placed for the offered item.

59. The system of claim 58, wherein the single interaction comprises any one of the group including:

a pressing of a single button; and

a pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

60. The system of claim 58, including a data receiver (103) to receive the order from the client, the order including:

information related to the offered item; and

user related personal information.

61. The system of claim 60, wherein the personal information comprises any one of the group including a user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

62. The system of claim 60, wherein application is to retrieve the personal information from a memory associated with the client.

63. The system of claim 58, wherein the data source (107) is to provide the information in the form of a television signal.

64. The system of claim 58 including a data transceiver (103) to communicate with a central processing facility (60) and wherein the client sends the order to the central processing facility (60) for receipt via the data transceiver (103).



68. A method of ordering an item using an interactive television system including at least one client (22, 50) and at least one server (10), the method comprising:

using the server (10) to provide data, some of which represents video and some of which represents a computing application, to the client;

at the client, causing the video to be displayed, and executing the computing application to cause display of interactive information;

using one or more of the displayed video and the interactive information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a television viewer (80);

enabling the viewer (80) to select the item by interacting with the client (22,50); and

in response to the viewer interaction, placing an order for the displayed item.

69. The method of claim 68, wherein the user interaction causes display of instructions to solicit information necessary to place the order.

70. The method of claim 69, wherein the information is solicited using one or more of an on-screen display and voice instructions.

71. The method of claim 68, wherein the viewer interaction is by way of a single command.

72. The method of claim 71, wherein the single command is by one of the group of:

the pressing of a single button; and

the pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

73. The method of claim 68, wherein placing the order is achieved by using: information related to the item being offered for sale and viewer related personal information.

74. The method of claim 73, wherein the personal information includes at least one of the group consisting of the viewer's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

75. The method of claim 74, wherein the personal information is stored in memory at the client (22, 50).

76. The method of claim 74, wherein the system further includes a local computer (40) and associated storage (70) and wherein the method further comprises:

using the client (22, 50) to retrieve information from one or more of the local computer (40) and the mass storage (70).

77. The method of claim 76, wherein the method further comprises:  
controlling the client (20, 50) by means of the local computer (40).

78. The method of claim 76, wherein the local computer (40) is part of a local  
area network.

79. The method of claim 68, wherein the system further includes a central  
processing facility (60) in communication with the server (10) and wherein the  
method comprises:

sending information used in processing the order from the client  
computer (22) to the central processing facility (60).

80. The method of claim 79, further comprising:

communicating information between the client (22, 50) and the server (10)  
via the central processing facility (60).

81. The method of claim 79, wherein a telephone system acts as the central  
processing facility (60).

82. The method of claim 68, further comprising:

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sending an order confirmation to the user (80) to confirm the order.

83. The method of claim 68, wherein the server (10) provides data in a series of multiplexed packets, ones of which contain data representing the video, and others of which represent the computing application.

84. The method of claim 83, wherein the computing application is repetitively transmitted during times that the video is transmitted.

85. The method of claim 83, wherein the client (22,50) includes a client computer (22) and an auxiliary processor (50), the method comprising:

using the auxiliary data processor (50) to process data representing the video, and

using the client computer (22) to execute the computing application.

86. The method of claim 85, wherein the client computer and the auxiliary data processor are contained in a set top box.

87. A method of ordering an item using an interactive television system, the method comprising:

receiving data, some of which represents video and some of which represents a computing application;

causing the video to be displayed;

executing the computing application to cause display of interactive information;

using one or more of the displayed video and the interactive information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a television user (80);

enabling the user (80) to select the item by way of an interaction; and

in response to the interaction, placing an order for the displayed item.

88. The method of claim 87, wherein the viewer interaction causes display of instructions to solicit information necessary to place the order.

89. The method of claim 88, wherein the information is solicited using one or more of an on-screen display and voice instructions.

90. The method of claim 87, wherein the viewer interaction is by way of a single command.

91. The method of claim 90, wherein the single command is by one of the group of:

the pressing of a single button; and

the pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

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106. An interactive television system comprising:

a server (10) to provide data, some of which represents video and some of which represents a computing application, to the client;

a client to:

cause the video to be displayed;

execute the computing application to cause display of interactive information;

use one or more of the displayed video and the interactive information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a television user (80);

enable the user (80) to select the item by interacting with the client (22,50); and

in response to the interaction, place an order for the displayed item.

107. The system of claim 106, wherein the user interaction causes display of instructions to solicit information necessary to place the order.

108. The system of claim 107, wherein the information is solicited using one or more of an on-screen display and voice instructions.



115. The system of claim 106, wherein the client (20, 50) is to be controlled by means of the local computer (40).

116. The system of claim 115, wherein the local computer (40) is part of a local area network.

117. The system of claim 106, wherein the system further includes a central processing facility (60) in communication with the server (10) and wherein the client is to send information used in processing the order to the central processing facility (60).

118. The system of claim 117, wherein the client (22, 50) is to communicate with the server (10) via the central processing facility (60).

119. The system of claim 118, wherein a telephone system acts as the central processing facility (60).

120. The system of claim 106, wherein the server is to send an order confirmation to the user (80) to confirm the order.

121. The system of claim 106, wherein the server provides data in a series of multiplexed packets, ones of which contain data representing the video, and others of which represent the computing application.

122. The system of claim 106, wherein the computing application is repetitively transmitted during times that the video is transmitted.

123. The system of claim 106, wherein the client (22,50) includes a client computer (22) and an auxiliary processor (50), and:

the auxiliary data processor (50) is to process data representing the video,  
and

the client computer (22) is to execute the computing application.

124. The system of claim 123, wherein the client computer and the auxiliary data processor are contained in a set top box.

125. An interactive television system to order an item, the system comprising:

a receiver (207) to receive data, some of which represents video and some of which represents a computing application; and

a processing unit (224) to:

execute the computing application to cause display of interactive information;

using the interactive information, show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a television user (80);

enable the user (80) to select the item by way of an interaction; and

in response to the interaction, place an order for the displayed item.

126. The system of claim 125, wherein the interaction causes the processing unit to display instructions to solicit information necessary to place the order.

127. The system of claim 126, wherein the information is solicited using one or more of an on-screen display and voice instructions.

128. The system of claim 125, wherein the interaction is by way of a single command.

129. The system of claim 128, wherein the single command is by one of the group of:

the pressing of a single button; and

the pressing of a single button on a TV remote control.

130. The system of claim 125, wherein the processing unit places the order using:

information related to the item being offered for sale and user related personal information.

131. The system of claim 130, wherein the personal information includes at least one of the group consisting of the user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.



132. The system of claim 130, including a local memory to store the personal information memory.

133. The system of claim 125, further comprising a central processing facility (60) to communicate information.

134. The system of claim 133, wherein a telephone system acts as the central processing facility (60).

135. The system of claim 125, further comprising a receiver to receive an order confirmation to confirm the order.

136. The system of claim 125, wherein the data comprises a series of multiplexed packets, ones of which contain data representing the video, and others of which represent the computing application, the system including a first extractor to extract the video and a second extractor to extract the computing application from the data.

137. The system of claim 125, including:

an auxiliary data processor (50) to process the video, and

a client computer (22) to execute the computing application.

138. The system of claim 137, wherein the client computer and the auxiliary data processor are contained in a set top box.

139. An interactive television system to order an item, the system comprising:

a server (10) to provide data, some of which represents video to be displayed and some of which represents a computing application to be executed to display interactive information, to a client, the client to use one or more of the displayed video and the interactive information to show and/or describe an item offered for sale to a television user (80) and to enable the user (80) to select the item by interacting with the client (22,50); and

a receiver, in response to the interaction, to receive an order for the displayed item.

140. The system of claim 139, wherein the received order includes:

information related to the item being offered for sale and user related personal information.

141. The system of claim 140, wherein the personal information includes at least one of the group consisting of the user's name, address, method of payment and credit card number.

142. The system of claim 139, wherein the server is to provide the data in a series of multiplexed packets, ones of which contain data representing the video, and others of which represent the computing application.

143. The system of claim 16, wherein the server is to repetitively transmit the computing application during times that the video is transmitted.

144. A method of placing an order for an item, the method comprising:

using a server system:

communicating a data stream to a client system, the data stream including information related to an item offered for sale; and

using a client system:

receiving an order request from a user;

automatically determining an item identity for an item to which the order request pertains utilizing the information related to the item offered for sale;

automatically retrieving personal information of the user previously stored in a storage device; and

placing an order, including the item identity and the retrieved personal information.

145. The method of claim 144 wherein the order request is received at the client system through detection of a purchase action by the user utilizing the client system.

146. The method of claim 145 wherein the purchase action is performed during the showing and/or describing of the item via the client system utilizing the information related to the item offered for sale.

147. The method of 145 wherein the purchase action includes input of the item identity into the client system.

148. The method of claim 145 wherein the automatic determination of the item identity includes relating the purchase action to the information related to the item.

~~149. The method of claim 148 wherein the relating includes the detecting of the purchase action during an offer of the item as specified any one of a group including by a time code and a command included within the information relate to the item.~~

150. The method of claim 144 wherein the item identity is received within the data stream transmitted from the server system to the client system.

151. The method of claim 144 wherein the data stream includes multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including a computing application.

152. The method of claim 149 wherein the time code is received within the data stream transmitted from the server system to the client system.

153. The method of claim 145 including prompting the user to perform the purchase action utilizing the client system.

154. The method of claim 153 wherein the prompting includes displaying a visual prompt on a display of the client system.

155. The method of claim 154 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.

156. The method of claim 153 wherein the prompting includes generating an audio prompt via an audio reproduction unit of the client system

157. The method of claim 156 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

158. The method of claim 145 wherein the detection of the purchase action includes detecting an interaction by the user with a control device of the client system.

159. The method of claim 158 wherein the interaction comprises a single action operation performed by the user.

160. The method of claim 159 wherein the single action operation comprises a single selection of a button of a remote control device.

161. The method of claim 144 wherein the storage device is associated with the client system and wherein the order is placed by the client system and communicated to the server system.

162. The method of claim 144 including receiving a client application program at the client system from the server system, the client application program to place the order.

163. The method of claim 162 wherein the client application program is received as part of the data stream.

164. The method of claim 144 including receiving, at the client system from the server system, an order confirmation responsive to a processing of the order by the server system.

165. A method of placing an order for an item, the method comprising:

receiving an order request from a user at a client system;

automatically determining an item identity for an item to which the order request pertains;

automatically retrieving personal information of the user previously stored in a storage device; and



172. The method of claim 171 wherein the data stream includes multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including an computing application.

173. The method of claim 170 wherein the time code is received within a data stream transmitted from the server system to the client system.

174. The method of claim 166 including prompting the user to perform the purchase action utilizing the client system.

175. The method of claim 175 wherein the prompting includes displaying a visual prompt on a display of the client system.

176. The method of claim 175 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.

177. The method of claim 174 wherein the prompting includes generating an audio prompt via an audio reproduction unit of the client system

178. The method of claim 177 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

179. The method of claim 166 wherein the detection of the purchase action includes detecting an interaction by the user with a control device of the client system.



180. The method of claim 179 wherein the interaction comprises a single action operation performed by the user.

181. The method of claim 180 wherein the single action operation comprises a single selection of a button of a remote control device.

182. The method of claim 165 wherein the storage device is associated with the client system and wherein the order is placed by the client system and communicated to the server system.

183. The method of claim 165 including receiving a client application program at the client system from the server system, the client application program to receive the order request and to place the order.

184. The method of claim 183 wherein the client application program is received as part of a data stream including content for display by the client system.

185. The method of claim 165 including receiving, at the client system from the server system, an order confirmation responsive to the processing of the order by the server system.

186. A method of facilitating placing of an order for an item, the method comprising communicating a data stream to a client system, the data stream including:

information related to an item offered for sale; and

an application program for execution by the client system to receive an order request from a user, automatically to determine an item identity for an item to which the order request pertains utilizing the information related to the item offered for sale, automatically to retrieve personal information of the user previously stored in a storage device, and to place an order, including the item identity and the retrieved personal information.

187. The method of claim 186 including inserting a time code and/or a command into the information related to the item.

188. The method of claim 186 including inserting the item identity into the information related to the item.

189. The method of claim 186 including generating the data stream to include multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including the computing application.

190. The method of claim 186 comprising including a visual prompt within the information related to the item offered for sale.

191. The method of claim 190 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.

192. The method of claim 186 comprising including an audio prompt within the information related to the item offered for sale.

193. The method of claim 190 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

194. The method of claim 186 wherein the application program is for execution by the client system to detect an interaction by the user with a control device of the client system as a purchase action.

195. The method of claim 194 wherein the interaction comprises a single action operation performed by the user.

196. The method of claim 195 wherein the single action operation comprises a single selection of a button of a remote control device.

197. The method of claim 186 wherein a storage device is associated with the client system and wherein the order is placed by the client system and communicated to the server system.

198. The method of claim 186 generating an order confirmation responsive to the processing of the order.

199. A system to place an order for an item, the system comprising:

a server system to transmit a data stream, the data stream including information related to an item offered for sale; and



203. The system of claim 200 wherein the client system is to relate the purchase action to the information related to the item.

204. The system of claim 203 wherein the clients system is to detect the purchase action during an offer of the item as specified any one of a group including by a time code and a command included within the information relate to the item.

205. The system of claim 199 wherein the data stream includes multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including an computing application.

206. The system of claim 200 wherein the client system is to prompt the user to perform the purchase action utilizing the client system.

207. The system of claim 206 wherein the client system is to display a visual prompt on a display of the client system.

208. The system of claim 207 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.

209. The system of claim 206 wherein the clients system is to generate an audio prompt via an audio reproduction unit of the client system

210. The system of claim 209 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

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218. A client system including:

a receiver (207) to receive the data stream including information related to an item offered for sale; and

a processing unit (224) to:

receive an order request from a user;

automatically determine an item identity for an item to which the order request pertains utilizing the information related to the item offered for sale;

automatically retrieve personal information of the user previously stored in a storage device; and

place an order, including the item identity and the retrieved personal information.

219. The system of claim 218 wherein the processing unit (224) is to receive the order request through detection of a purchase action by the user.

220. The system of claim 219 wherein processing unit (224) is to detect the purchase action during the showing and/or describing of the item by the client system utilizing the information related to the item offered for sale.

221. The system of claim 219 wherein the processing unit (224) is to receive input of the item identity as part of the purchase action.

222. The system of claim 219 wherein the processing unit (224) is to relate the purchase action to the information related to the item.

223. The system of claim 219 wherein the processing unit (224) to detect the purchase action during an offer of the item as specified any one of a group including by a time code and a command included within the information relate to the item.

224. The system of claim 218 wherein the receiver (207) is to receive the data stream as multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including an computing application, the receiver further including a first extractor (204) to extract the first stream of packets from the data stream and a second extractor (206) to extract the second stream of packets from the data stream.

225. The system of claim 219 wherein the processing unit (224) and/or the receiver (207) is to prompt the user to perform the purchase action utilizing the client system.

226. The system of claim 225 wherein the processing unit (224) and/or the receiver (207) is to display a visual prompt on a display of the client system.

227. The system of claim 226 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.



228. The system of claim 228 wherein the processing unit (224) and/or the receiver (207) is to generate an audio prompt via an audio reproduction unit of the client system

229. The system of claim 228 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

230. The system of claim 219 wherein the processing unit (224) is to detect the purchase action by detecting an interaction by the user with a control device of the client system.

231. The system of claim 230 wherein the interaction comprises a single action operation performed by the user.

232. The system of claim 231 wherein the single action operation comprises a single selection of a button of a remote control device.

233. The system of claim 218 including storage device is associated with the client system and wherein the order is placed by the client system and communicated to a server system.

234. The system of claim 218 wherein the receiver (207) to receive a client application program from a server system, the client application program being executable by the processing unit (224) to receive the order request and to place the order.

235. The system of claim 234 wherein the receiver is to receive the client application program as part of the data stream.

236. The system of claim 218 wherein the receiver (207) is to receive an order confirmation responsive to the processing of the order by the server system.

237. A server system to facilitate placing of an order for an item, the system comprising:

a data source (107) to provide information related to an item offered for sale; and

an application source (101) to provide an application program for execution by the client system to receive an order request from a user, automatically to determine an item identity for an item to which the order request pertains, automatically to retrieve personal information of the user previously stored in a storage device, and to place an order, including the item identity and the retrieved personal information; and

a multiplexer (106) to communicate the information and the application program to a client system.

238. The system of claim 237 wherein the multiplexer is to generate the data stream to include multiplexed first and second streams of packets, the first stream of packets including display information to generate an image on a display of the client system, and the second stream of packets including the computing application.

239. The system of claim 237 wherein the application source and/or data source is to include a visual prompt within the information related to the item offered for sale.

240. The system of claim 239 wherein the visual prompt includes any of a group including an indicia, instructions and a menu.

241. The method of claim 237 wherein the application source and/or data source is to include an audio prompt within the information related to the item offered for sale.

242. The method of claim 241 wherein the audio prompt comprises any one of a group including instructions, options and a menu.

243. The method of claim 237 wherein a detection of a purchase action by the application program includes detecting an interaction by the user with a control device of the client system.

244. The method of claim 243 wherein the interaction comprises a single action operation performed by the user.

245. The method of claim 244 wherein the single action operation comprises a single selection of a button of a remote control device.

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